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ALCOHOLICS.

BY AN ANALYST.

IN the earlier days of human history, we may suppose the free-will gifts of Nature were sufficient for the wants of man. He lived content with such things as he found, and satisfied his thirst with nothing stronger than a draught of milk; or water, Adam's good old wine. But this golden age of temperance had an end, although when, or how, we know not. This much, at least, is certain, that a long way back in history, either by accident or by experiment, some one discovered how to make fermented liquors, and mankind speedily became acquainted with the properties of alcohol; although the art of calling forth the fiery spirit from its habitation is an attainment of quite modern date.

Forming as it does the intoxicating ingredient in fermented liquors, and having regard to the enormous consumption of these at the present day, alcohol is a substance at once of national importance and general interest. While theoretically obtainable from various chemical substances, practically the whole of our alcohol is derived from starch, sugar, or other saccharine materials; in this country, commonly from grain of various kinds, either malted or unmalted; while in Germany, spirits are largely made from potatoes; in France, from beetroot and carrots; and in Sweden, from the birch and maple.

When barley or other grain is steeped in water till it sprouts, and is then carefully dried, it becomes what is termed malt. By this process, part of the starch of which the grain is mainly composed has been converted into sugar, and a new substance has been developed, known as diastase, a nitrogenous body, which immediately, when the malt is mixed with water, reacts on the remaining starch, and transforms it also into sugar, the liquid consequently soon assuming a sweet taste. We have now, in fact, a solution of sugar, which is known as *wort*; but we may attain the same end by using unmalted grain—potatoes, peas, beans, or other

starchy material, which, by the addition of dilute sulphuric acid, is converted into a soluble sugar. Having thus obtained a solution of sugar from any of these sources, or still more directly from beetroot or the 'toothsome cane,' yeast is added to the wort, and the process known as 'fermentation' is rapidly set up, by which the sugar is decomposed into two chief products, alcohol and carbonic acid gas; and several minor ones, glycerine, succinic acid, &c., ninety-five out of every hundred parts of sugar being transformed into alcohol and carbonic acid, four parts going to form glycerine, &c., and one part as nourishment to the yeast plant, which has multiplied immensely, and now forms a frothy scum upon the surface of the liquid. By the fermentation, spirits have been produced; and the object of the next process, the distillation of the fermented wort or wash, is to separate the spirit from the liquid in which it exists. The produce of this operation is an impure spirit known as 'low wines,' which has to be re-distilled at a lower temperature, to get rid of part of the water and the oils with which it is contaminated; the product of this second distillation being the mixture of alcohol and water known as 'whisky' or 'spirits of wine,' because it was by the distillation of wine that spirits were first obtained. Of late years, however, by means of a modern invention known as Coffey's Still, a purer spirit is obtained by a single distillation than that produced by the double operation with an ordinary 'pot still.'

Alcohol has such a strong affinity for water, that by simple distillation it is impossible to obtain a stronger spirit than one containing about ninety-two per cent. of absolute alcohol; but except for chemical purposes, the pure material is never made, spirits intended for whisky usually ranging from 'proof' to about twenty degrees over-proof, and that produced above forty-three degrees O.P. (over-proof) being classed as spirits of wine. The modern and legal definition of 'proof-spirit is such as at fifty-one degrees Fahrenheit shall be twelve-thirteenths the weight of an equal measure of distilled water;' and such spirit contains about

equal parts of alcohol and water. Nowadays, we are very scientific and exact in all our methods; but we borrow our word 'proof' from the olden smuggling times, when the country-folks used to make their own whisky, and test its strength by soaking some gunpowder in it, and on the application of a light, pronouncing it to be under or over proof according as it failed or succeeded in allowing the gunpowder to ignite.

Thus far we have considered merely alcohol, or simple *aqua vita*. But were it simply ethylic alcohol and water which were obtained by distillation, we should have spirits all possessing a uniform taste and character; this is not the case, however, for some of the essential oils pass over with the spirit. Thus, whisky has a flavour due to fusel oil, or to peat-dried malt; brandy, which is made by distilling wine, to a peculiar oil in the grape; rum, which is obtained from molasses, to an essential oil in the sugar-cane; arrack, to an oil in the rice from which it is made; and gin, to the juniper berries, coriander, or orris-root with which it is distilled. Some of these oils are hurtful—fusel oil, for instance; and the difference between old and new whisky is chiefly due to the evaporation of this oil, or its absorption into the cask; although the improvement in the older material may be likewise brought about by keeping in a sherry cask, which gives it a pleasant flavour and a slightly straw-coloured tint. Many people have an idea that the best whisky is highly coloured; but the truth is whisky is quite colourless when distilled, and will remain so, unless kept in a wine-cask, or some artificial colouring be added, as is frequently done to please the public fancy, and deceive the would-be judges of a 'fine old article.' It is rather interesting to know the way in which some of the much-trumpeted 'old whiskies' are compounded. We believe it is no uncommon practice to mix together a few casks of old whisky in a vat, add a cask or two of strong spirits of wine, reduce with water, and add burnt sugar till a fine sherry colour is obtained—thus producing a delightful 'blend,' which goes down with the utmost satisfaction. By means of pelargonate of ethyl, the peat-reek flavour can be imitated; but this is not very commonly practised; and over a glass of some modern blend, many an old Highlander bewails the loss of the smuggled 'sma'-still' whisky of his younger days, so highly esteemed because of its strength, acquired by being carried about in bladders or skins, which allowed most of the water—but very little of the alcohol—to pass through and evaporate; the spirit thus left being much stronger than could otherwise be produced.

Such a whisky, when shaken up in a clear glass bottle, or when poured into a glass, gave a fine bead or bubble; and according as the beads were large and numerous and quickly disappeared, so was the spirit held in popular esteem. But such rude methods of pronouncing on the strength of spirits are as little practised now as smuggling itself. For a time, sets of small hollow bulbs

of glass, called *Lovi's Beads*, were used, each when it just floated indicating a particular strength, or rather a specific gravity; but now the only legal instrument in use is the hydrometer, on the accuracy of which depends the vast revenue arising from the duty on some thirty million gallons of spirits annually produced in the United Kingdom.

About the beginning of the eighteenth century, the duty upon spirits was twenty shillings a gallon; but smuggling flourished so much in consequence, that a much lower rate became necessary; and after many fluctuations and different scales for the three countries, in 1860 the duty was fixed at the present uniform rate of ten shillings per proof gallon for the whole kingdom; the export trade being encouraged by a drawback of twopence on every gallon sent abroad; while the import of foreign spirit is checked by a duty of fivepence per gallon. At such a high figure, the duty on spirits of wine would interfere with many industries, and be a serious check to science; but to obviate this difficulty, spirits of wine may be used for manufacturing and scientific purposes free of duty, if containing ten per cent. of wood naphtha, so as to unfit it for human consumption. This mixture of ninety per cent. spirits of wine and ten per cent. wood naphtha is known as 'methylated spirit,' and for most purposes is quite as good as pure spirit. Under the name of 'Finish,' the same article is allowed to be retailed provided it contain three ounces of shell-lac or gum-resin dissolved in every gallon of the spirit.

In the manufacture of wine, the 'must' or expressed juice of the grape is simply set aside in vats, and fermentation is allowed to take place naturally—in the case of red wines, the skins being left to ferment with the juice, as they contain a large proportion of colouring matter. The sugar of the grape becomes converted into alcohol; but where there is a large amount of sugar present, some of it may remain unchanged, thus yielding a sweet or 'fruity' wine; while one in which all the sugar has been fermented is known as a 'dry' wine.

The cost of a wine appears to bear no relation to the amount of spirit in it, but to depend upon the *bouquet* or peculiar flavour given by ethereal salts produced by the acid and alcohol in the wine; and the chief object of adulteration is to imitate this characteristic flavour. For this purpose, the Greeks use turpentine or resin, just as the ancient Romans used pitch or tar; and most of the cheap champagne sold in this country is prepared from gooseberry wine. The flavour of Moselle is imitated by a tincture of elder-flowers; while extract of sweet-brier, orris-root, almonds, cherry, and laurel water are largely used for producing various artificial bouquets. The astringency of wine is imitated by oak sawdust or grape-seeds; while the 'crust' of wine is now no reliable indication of age; for if a bottle of new port be put into hot water, and afterwards placed in a cellar, it soon deposits a crust like that of years; and when well cobwebbed, the deception is complete.

People in this country fancy that the same variety of wine should have one uniform flavour and colour; but frequently it happens that through deficiency in sunshine or some other cause, the produce of one year is much lighter in

colour or poorer in bouquet than usual; so, to satisfy the popular idea, some additional flavour is added, and the colour is made up by various ingredients. In Portugal and Spain, many plants, such as blackberries and bilberries, are cultivated solely for this purpose; and in one year, Spain alone imported three hundred thousand pounds-weight of elder-berries to be thus employed. But besides these, logwood and Brazil-wood are quite commonly used for colouring red wines, especially port, the sophistication of which is so proverbial. For the manufacture of the artificial article, spoiled cider is largely used; and in Hamburg, large quantities of it are made from materials which have never seen Oporto. In like manner, 'the vine-clad hills of Bingen' do not yield anything like the quantity of wine which is produced in that old town 'beside the castled Rhine.' So at Certe, in Normandy, there are large works which unblushingly hang out the sign, 'Wines manufactured here.' At this place, great quantities of sherry (!) are prepared for the English market from a cheap white wine, which is 'fortified' with brandy, coloured up with treacle, and flavoured with almonds. Although we must in fairness admit that the sherry we import is not invariably so doctored, we are not exaggerating when we say that scarcely a single natural sherry reaches this country, almost all the stronger wines, sherry, port, Madeira, and many of the light wines of France and Germany, being more or less fortified by the addition of spirit before exportation; the alleged object being to arrest fermentation, and so avoid souring, as well as to make them stand the voyage; while many of them are still further fortified upon arrival in this country.

Although sherry is the only wine admitted into the pharmacopœia, port is quite as frequently recommended by the medical faculty; but so seldom is good port to be obtained at anything like a moderate price, that brandy for a stimulant, and Madeira for its nutritive value, are much preferable. The best of the cheap wines are those of Hungary and Bordeaux (clarets); and of the effervescing wines—those bottled while fermentation is still proceeding—the white champagnes are generally purer than the pink, there being much less cover for adulteration in the former.

Brandy is usually supposed to be obtained by distilling the fermented juice of the grape; and the most esteemed quality is that produced in the district of Cognac. But alas! comparatively little of the so-called Cognac now comes from that quarter, much of it being brandy made from the red wines of Portugal and Spain, and also from the refuse of the wine-press; while a large percentage of the brandy sold in Britain has been originally 'raw grain' whisky manufactured in Scotland and sent to the continent to be doctored. Like whisky, brandy is quite colourless when newly made; but when kept in wooden casks, it acquires a light sherry tint from the colouring matter of the wood; and this is frequently deepened by the addition of burnt sugar, to adapt it for the public taste.

Gin or geneva, which takes its name from *genièvre*, the French for juniper, is made by distilling ordinary spirit with juniper-berries and other flavouring materials, the essential oils of

which pass over with the spirit, and is an article largely consumed in London. Like most alcoholic liquors, it is seldom retailed unsophisticated; the quantity obtainable for a few coppers being sufficient proof to any one of ordinary perception and intelligence that it is watered to an enormous extent. But mere dilution is not the only way in which it suffers; for on the addition of water, the liquid becomes turbid, owing to the precipitation of the flavouring oils, thus necessitating an addition known as 'the doctor.' This usually consists of alum and carbonate of potash with some additional flavouring material, whereby the gin is again rendered bright and palatable.

Beer—which may be termed the national beverage of England—should be made entirely from malt and hops; and such is the beer brewed by the leading English firms, which is so famous all the world over. In the manufacture of beer, the process is to some extent identical with that for making spirits; but for beer, the wort is boiled in large copper vessels with the necessary amount of hops; and the character of the beer depends in great measure on the malt, hops, and water used in brewing, and the careful management of the wort during fermentation. Pale and amber coloured malts are used for brewing bitter beer, table beer, and pale ale; whilst a darker variety is used for sweet ale; and a quantity of black or charred malt for stout and porter. For the successful preparation of pale ale, the finest Kentish hops, and a very hard water containing a large amount of earthy salts in solution, are both of the utmost importance.

In the brewery, though inferior articles may be used, beer is seldom doctored. It is on the retailer's premises that it suffers such adulteration as the addition of water, sugar, treacle, liquorice, caramel, picric acid, *Cocculus indicus*, alum, salt, copperas, chalk, soda, &c.; and there are very few publicans—in the Metropolis at least—who do not use some one or more of these ingredients, to 'suit it to the tastes of their customers.'

The amount of alcohol present varies greatly in the several liquors of which it forms the intoxicating ingredient, rum containing about seventy-five per cent.; whisky and brandy averaging about fifty; port-wine, twenty; sherry, fifteen to twenty-four; Madeira, nineteen; claret, ten; champagne, fourteen; cider, six; ales and porter, from six to twelve; and abstainers will probably be surprised to learn that *all fermented drinks* contain alcohol, ginger beer, &c., usually containing from one to three per cent. of it. Indeed, total abstinence from alcohol would seem almost an impossibility, for even milk contains small quantities of it; and in bread-making, it is produced in considerable quantity by the action of the yeast upon the sugar in the flour; the aggregate amount of spirit thus produced in London being some three hundred thousand gallons annually. Some chemists go the length of asserting that even water itself is not entirely free from it!

It is quite beyond the purpose of the present paper to discuss the much-debated temperance question, or to touch upon the interesting lore connected with the drinking customs of the various races and ages of mankind; and if perhaps in these remarks we have revealed one of the darker sides of human nature, this much may be confidently asserted, that at least the leading manu-

facturers of our national beverages, beer and whisky, can be thoroughly depended upon for producing the genuine unadulterated article. And while consumers of our own home produce have this satisfaction, let them, at the same time, be mindful of the good old maxim, in their alcoholics as in all things else, to observe the happy mean of moderation.

THE FORTUNES OF BERTRAM OAKLEY.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—THE HEIRESS.

BERTRAM OAKLEY, when he reached the Westons' house in Portland Place, and was shown, as a matter of course, into the drawing-room, found it empty. The windows were open, and, among others, the French-window opening upon the broad shallow stone steps that led to the garden, then in its pride of summer-bloom. The ladies—so the servant who admitted Bertram, said—were at home. But the first of these who entered the room was Miss Carrington. And Miss Carrington was ever gracious, in these later days, to Bertram Oakley. It was no trifling compliment, on the part of the proud heiress, to be gracious to a young man. That brilliant young amazon, armed in the double panoply of her charms and her cash, having a masterful temper and tolerable brains, was apt to snub, twit, and harass the opposite sex on every available opportunity, and had caused some honest, stupid admirers, higher placed than Messrs Mervyn's Assistant Manager, to spend some miserable half-hours under fire of her mocking eyes and irritating remarks. But towards Bertram, her manner had strangely softened.

'You are tired to death, Mr Oakley, if you would only confess it; but you are too thorough a Spartan for that,' said the fair Julia. 'You have been dreadfully busy, I suppose?'

'We are always busy, Miss Carrington, in Mervyn's Yard,' answered Bertram, smiling.

'I wish I were a man!' said she, rather inconsistently, and perhaps a little insincerely, for very pretty girls seldom repine at the impossibility of a change of sex. 'If I were, I might be of some good in the world, and win a name and distinction, as I am sure you will do, Mr Oakley. But men must work, and women must weep, as the song says, to the end of time, I fear.'

'Work is wholesome for us; and you, Miss Carrington, have, I hope, little reason to weep,' replied Bertram.

'How can you tell that?' she asked, with a ring of melancholy in her modulated voice, and a drooping of her half-closed eyelids, the long dark lashes of which fell to her rounded cheek, as she propped her graceful head on her gloved hand. She had risen from her chair, and was now standing, leaning against the corner of the marble chimney-piece, a great vase of ferns making a background to her beautiful face, as she looked down upon Bertram with all the witchery of art and loveliness combined. There are young ladies who regard this attitude as irresistible; and indeed the *pose*, if well managed, is a fascinating one. Even Bertram could not help remarking to himself how very handsome was Julia Carrington; but he bore the battery of her dark eyes, for so young a man, well. Perhaps his own freedom from vanity, the honest

purpose that never slumbered in his breast, served as a shield against the artifices that have humbled many a warrior and sage and statesman since the days of Vivien and Merlin.

'How little you men know of women, or their feelings, or their hearts!' continued Miss Carrington. 'You have your ambitions, your pursuits, which are apart from ours; and when our sympathy tries to follow you, you smile superior, as though we were but children of a larger growth, unworthy of your confidence. As for us, you appear to consider that if we have good homes, and new dresses, and amusements, we must be happy. It would be our own fault, I suppose, if we are not.'

'I should have thought you happy, Miss Carrington,' replied Bertram, rising from his chair; 'for you are young, and rich, as I have heard, and have so many friends.'

He could not speak of the patent and notable fact of her beauty, because, in these plain-spoken and uncomplimentary days, it trenches on the confines of love-making to do that, and to flirt with Julia Carrington was wholly foreign to Bertram's thoughts. So he used the safe word—friends; and Julia felt a little annoyed, and beat upon the carpet with the tip of her well-booted foot, partly, perhaps, because, by getting up, Bertram had got away from under the raking artillery of her dark-glancing eyes, and spoiled the advantage of her carefully studied attitude.

'Friends! yes,' she retorted petulantly. 'No doubt of that. When one is rich, as you tell me that I am, Mr Oakley, one seldom finds a dearth of friends. How would it be, if I were poor!'

'I am poor, and I have found very kind ones,' answered Bertram, with his quiet smile.

'You—you are a man, with a career before you, and that is so different,' said Miss Carrington. 'We women find our only possible happiness in merging our own wishes, our own hopes, in those of another, and'—

At this moment, in came the two Weston girls, with their honest, good-humoured faces, and their prattle about the events of the day and the gossip of the town; and very soon afterwards their mother entered; and thus a stop was put to Julia Carrington's psychological dissertation on the tastes and aspirations of the sex whereof she was an ornament; nor was Bertram sorry that the conversation should become general and commonplace. There had been, indeed, something slightly embarrassing in the persistent desire of the fair Julia—not now evinced for the first time—to entangle him in that species of talk from which it is difficult to emerge without saying something silly, at best. And Bertram, who was no coxcomb, attributed to the mere idle desire of conquest the palpable wish of the heiress to bring him, as a wooer, to her feet. The thing did not vex him much. It did not amuse him at all. He owned her face to be very fair, and her form and bearing full of a stately grace; but he felt thankful to Mrs Weston and her daughters for their opportune arrival.

The talk of the Weston ladies was not such as to deserve minute record. To chronicle small-beer is seldom worth the while. There certainly was 'something' between Lydia Snooks and young Tomkins of the Peninsular and Oriental, who

expected to command the steamer of which he was first-officer. Mrs Snooks was smilingly oracular; but the engagement was considered certain.—The Burtons' children had scarlatina.—Old Colonel Hanchett's gout had caused the grand dinner-party to be put off.—There was the sweetest thing in hats, a duck of a hat, fresh from Paris, it was said, to be seen at Madame Flahaut, the milliner's, in High Street.—Papa was at the Club still, engaged at whist, no doubt. Mr Weston did enjoy a rubber between office-hours and dinner-time; and though the claims of imperious podagra deprived him of Colonel Hanchett's society, no doubt there were contemporaries enough to cut and shuffle and deal those marvellous pieces of painted pasteboard which harsh Methodist preachers of the last century used to designate as the books of Apollyon.

The conversation now turned upon a certain Patent which Bertram was about to take out, to explain which, it should be mentioned that one of his inventions in steam-machinery having met with high praise from Mr Mervyn and the technical judges to whom it had been shown, was about to be legally protected. Good Mrs Weston and her girls were almost as proud and as pleased as if their new friend had been a son of the one and a brother of the other two. That Bertram was a rising man, and one sure of success, had come to be an article of faith in the Weston household; and even gruff, good-natured Mr Weston had acknowledged to his wife that 'the boy was born with a diamond spoon in his mouth, which is better than a gold or silver one,' and would rise to the surface, let who would try to sink him. It was noticed, too, that the Manager took a pleasure in the talk of his young Assistant, which he did not take in that of the highly respectable and substantial householders with whom he conferred over the card-table and the mahogany. And when Mrs Weston pressed Bertram to stay and dine, she knew that her lord would be pleased to see that bright, thoughtful young face beside the board. Bertram, however, did not accept the invitation to dinner. He had work, he said, to do.

'Work is all very well; but it does not do to make a toil of a pleasure,' said honest Mrs Weston, with a pardonable confusion of ideas. 'You are getting pale and fagged, Mr Oakley.—Yes; you may laugh; but I have had experience of young people, and know that a holiday does good, now and then. Next month, for instance, there is the great Southampton Archery meeting—North and South—and we shall have a sight to show you worth looking at. We are famous bowmen and archeresses here, you know, so near the New Forest; and yet we shall have enough to do, against Nottingham and Cheshire and York, and the rest, to keep the Gold Cup.'

'You will be there, at anyrate, on the 27th?' asked Julia Carrington.

'Yes,' Bertram answered. He certainly meant to be present at that contest with bows and arrows, the rather that by that time his labours with respect to the Patent, which absorbed most of his spare time, would be over. Then he took his leave. Miss Carrington, as they parted, gave him a strange look from under the silken fringe of her eyelids—a long, languishing look, which haunted him afterwards, in spite of himself. He fancied,

too, that there was a sadness in her air and bearing which may not have been wholly feigned; but he went resolutely back to his lodgings, and busied himself with his models and his drawings and his books, and presently forgot, as students can, the enchantress and her wiles. It was deep in the night when he laid his head upon his pillow, at last to sleep the dreamless sleep that waits on toil.

HOW SOME AUTHORS WORK.

INTELLIGENT people are generally curious about authors and authorship. They long to know how certain ideas originated in the minds of the writers. Was such and such a book composed under the influence of sudden inspiration, or was it the slow product of laborious thought? Was it written off at once without stop or stay, or was it corrected and revised with years of anxious care? There are indeed few things more interesting, though few more difficult, than to trace the growth of a book from its first conception till it develops into full life and vigour. For the growth is different in different minds; and authors are peculiarly chary of lifting the veil, and letting outsiders penetrate behind the scenes.

It is only comparatively recently that we knew to a certainty how the idea of *Adam Bede* began to arise in George Eliot's mind. The usual report was that the Quakeress, Dinah Morris, was literally 'copied' from Elizabeth Evans, George Eliot's aunt, who had been a female preacher at Wirksworth in Derbyshire. But from George Eliot's own account, given in her letter to Miss Sara Hennell, we find what the facts of the case really were. She only saw her aunt for a short time. Elizabeth Evans was then a 'tiny little woman about sixty, with bright, small, dark eyes, and hair that had been black, but was now gray;' of a totally different physical type from Dinah. For a fortnight, Elizabeth Evans left her home and visited her niece in Warwickshire. One sunny afternoon, she happened casually to mention that in her youth she had, with another pious woman, visited an unhappy girl in prison, stayed with her all night, and gone with her to execution. 'This incident,' adds George Eliot, 'lay on my mind for years, as a dead germ apparently, till time had made a *nidus* in which it could fructify. It then turned out to be the germ of *Adam Bede*.' We may take this very remarkable account as a fresh proof of the adaptive faculty of genius. A slight newspaper paragraph; a passing word in ordinary conversation; a sentence in a book; a trifling anecdote, may suggest ideas which will eventually blossom out into volumes of intense interest. That germ is, however, the root of the matter; it is the mainspring on which the whole depends.

Mr James Payn, the novelist, tells us that when he was a very young man, and had very little experience, he was reading on a coach-box an account of some gigantic trees. One of them was described as sound outside; but within, for many feet, a mass of rottenness and decay. 'If a boy should climb up, bird-nesting, into the fork of it, thought I, he might go down feet first, and never be heard of again.' 'Then,' he adds, 'it struck me what an appropriate end it would be for a bad character of a novel. Before I had left

the coach-box, I had thought out *Lost Sir Massingberd*. Such a process lasted for a shorter time with Mr Payn than with the majority of novelists; with many, the little seed might have germinated for years before it brought forth fruit. Yet Mr Payn is remarkable for the clearness and coherency of his plots; they always hang well together, and have a substantial back-bone.

Other writers do not lay so great a stress on plots. Dickens's plots are rambling and discursive in the extreme. They resemble a high-road that winds, now into a green lane, now up a steep hill, and now down to a broad valley, while we are quite unable to tell how we arrived there. His personages are his strong point; it was they who haunted his imagination day and night. He wrote under strong pressure, and with an intense consciousness of the reality of his men and women. For the time being, he lost his own identity in that of the creations of his brain. The first ideas that came to him were at once eagerly seized and committed to paper, without any elaborate circumspection, though he was at infinite subsequent pains to revise and correct both MS. and proof. With regard to Kingsley, we learn from his *Life*, that none of his prose fictions, except *Alton Locke*, was ever copied, his usual habit being to dictate to his wife as he walked up and down his study. Hence, probably, the inequality of his writings. His habit was thoroughly to master his subject, whether book or sermon, generally out in the open air, in his garden on the moor, or by the side of a lonely trout stream, and never to put pen to paper till the ideas were clothed in words. And these, except in the case of poetry, he seldom altered.

Charles Lever was one of those authors who hated the drudgery of copying and revising. He says himself: 'I wrote as I felt, sometimes in good spirits, sometimes in bad, always carelessly, for, God help me! I can do no better. When I sat down to write *O'Malley*, I was as I have ever been, very low with fortune; and the success of a new venture was pretty much as eventful to me as the turn of a right colour at *rouge-et-noir*. At the same time, I had then an amount of spring in my temperament and a power of enjoying life, which I can honestly say I never found surpassed. The world had for me all the interest of an admirable comedy.' Lever had remarkably little of the professional author about him; and his biographer tells us that no panegyric about his last book would have given him as much satisfaction as an acknowledgment of his superiority at whist!

It constantly happens that authors themselves prefer those of their books which the public fail to appreciate. This was certainly the case with the late Lord Lytton. In one of his letters to Lady Blessington, he says: 'I have always found one is never so successful as when one is least sanguine. I felt in the deepest despondency about *Pompeii* and *Eugene Aram*, and was certain, nay, most presumptuous about *Devereux*, which is the least generally popular of my writings.' In the same way, George Eliot was far more anxious to be known as the author of *The Spanish Gypsy* than of *Adam Bede*. It is quite natural that authors who make composition a study, should pride themselves on those books which have cost them most pains and trouble. But

these books are not always their masterpieces. The comic actor who is full of the idea that his forte is tragedy, suddenly and unexpectedly finds himself hissed.

Hardly any form of composition seems as easy as a good comedy; yet those theatre-goers who smile at the sparkling dialogue of *The School for Scandal*, would hardly believe the amount of thought and labour it cost Sheridan. The characters were altered and recast again and again. Many of the speeches put into the mouths of Sir Peter and Lady Teazle are so shifted and remodelled from what they were in the first rough draft, that hardly a word stands in the same order as it originally did.

Of all literary workers, Balzac was certainly the most extraordinary in his *modus operandi*. At first, he would write his novel in a few pages—hardly more than the plot. These would be sent to the printer, who would return the few columns of print, pasted in the middle of half-a-dozen blank sheets in such a way that there was an immense margin left all round. On this margin, Balzac would begin to work, sketching the personages of the story, interpolating the dialogue, perhaps even completely altering the original design of the book. Horizontal, diagonal, and vertical lines would run everywhere; the paper would be scrawled over with asterisks, crosses, and every kind of mark. The dreams of the unlucky printers must surely have been haunted by those terrible sheets, besprinkled with all the signs of the zodiac, and interspersed with long feelers like the legs of spiders. To decipher such hieroglyphics must indeed have been no enviable task. Four or five times this process was repeated, until at last the few columns had swelled into a book; and the book, in its turn, never went through a fresh edition without being revised by its over-scrupulous creator, 'who sacrificed a considerable portion of his profits by this eccentric plan of building up a book.'

Harriet Martineau at first believed copying to be absolutely necessary. She had read Miss Edgeworth's account of her method of writing—submitting her rough sketch to her father, then copying and altering many times, till no one page of her *Leonora* stood at last as it did at first. But such a tedious process did not suit Miss Martineau's habits of thought, and her haste to appear in print. She found that there was no use copying if she did not alter, and that even if she did alter, she had to change back again; so she adopted Abbott's maxim, 'To know first what you want to say, and then say it in the first words that come to you.'

We have a very different style and a different result in Charlotte Brontë's toil in authorship. She was in the habit of writing her first drafts in a very small square book or folding of paper, from which she copied with extreme care. Samuel Rogers's advice was, 'To write a very little and seldom—to put it by—and read it from time to time, and copy it pretty often, and show it to good judges.' Another contemporary authoress, Mary Russell Mitford, frankly confesses that she was always a most slow and laborious writer. 'The Preface to the Tragedies was written three times over throughout, and many parts of it five or six. Almost every line of *Atherton* has been written three times over, and it is certainly the most cheerful and sunshiny story that was ever

composed 'in such a state of helpless feebleness and suffering.'

Every author must choose the mode of composition which suits him or her best. With some, copying may be but a needless labour; but to beginners it is almost indispensable; and the work which is not subjected to such careful consideration and revision is not likely to serve more than a temporary purpose. From this may be excepted the work of daily journalists and others whose writings are demanded as fast as they can be penned; but on the part of those who would aspire to do work that seeks a permanent place in the world of literature, much care as well as never-ceasing diligence is required.

SHALL SHE BE SACRIFICED?

CHAPTER II.—IS HE MAD?

SEVERAL days passed away, and Miss Colebrooke soon became quite fond of my Aunt. Mrs Thompson improved; and I rejoiced at this, especially for her young mistress's sake. Twice during the next week the mysterious stranger made his presence known. Once I caught sight of him at one of the upper windows at the back of the house, peeping stealthily behind the blind; and another time, the hall-door having been by accident left ajar, I had walked up-stairs without giving notice of my arrival, when I again saw him suddenly disappear up the stairs. It was in the evening, after the maid had gone home. But still I said nothing to Miss Colebrooke about it. I thought it was not my place to question her, being a comparative stranger; but I felt extremely inclined to do so. That there was some mystery connected with her, was evident enough. What it was, I could only conjecture. It might be that she had made a runaway marriage, abetted by Mrs Thompson, and which circumstances rendered necessary should be kept secret. I could not bear to think of this; but an incident that occurred a few days later strengthened my suspicion.

My last evening visit had been paid to the patient. It was past eleven; and I was standing at the open window of my bedroom, looking out on the night, which was very starry, but moonless, when I heard voices below in the next garden, and distinguished two dark figures.

'I must take a walk out to-morrow. I tell you, Ida, I shall die moping up in that room all day, and you being obliged to be so much with Mrs Thompson makes me lonelier than ever. I want exercise.'

'Hush! Don't speak so loudly; you will be heard. Listen to me. For my sake, do remember;' and here her voice sank, so that I did not catch the conclusion of her speech. It was Miss Colebrooke who spoke. They could not see me, though I saw them. I waited for more.

'Yes, yes,' he replied to whatever it was she had said to him. 'I know that, my darling. Have they said anything about having seen me?'

I did not hear her answer. But presently I heard her sob, and he put his arm round her and kissed her, and then drew her gently into the house.

That was all; but it was enough to confirm

my ideas. I cannot describe what I felt. No one could have known her for a fortnight, as I had, without having their peace of mind disturbed. I need not say that I slept very little that night; and I did not wonder at my Aunt telling me at breakfast, next morning, that I was not looking well. Before paying my next visit to the house-keeper, I had made up my mind to tell Miss Colebrooke what I had seen. It would put my suspense at an end to know the truth.

'Miss Colebrooke,' I said to her rather abruptly as she was walking down the hall passage with me, 'you are married, I believe?'

She started, and stared me in the face in complete astonishment, and then burst into a low musical laugh.

I had never heard her laugh before, and I liked to hear it; it gave me a certain hope too. 'Why do you laugh?' I asked. 'Am I not right?'

'How can you think I am married?' she said.

'My thought is wrong, then?'

'Indeed, it is. If I am married, I don't know it myself. But why do you ask, Doctor?'

'Well, I will tell you. If you were to see a man put his arm round a young lady and kiss her affectionately, what would you think?—That they were married, or at anyrate engaged to be married?'

She gave a slight involuntary exclamation, but did not reply.

I repeated my words and looked straight into her eyes. She turned them away, with an uneasy expression on her face.

'The people you saw,' she replied presently, 'need not be husband and wife, or even lovers. They might be brother and sister.'

'Well, yes; so they might be. Have you a brother, Miss Colebrooke?'

'I do not,' she said, drawing up her pretty head with dignity, 'understand why you want to know, or why should you ask me so many questions—especially when?—' She stopped.

'Then the gentleman I saw was your brother?'

'You will not mention'—she began.

'You don't think,' I interrupted, 'that I gossip about what I may learn during my visits to patients. You must consider'—

'I did not mean to offend you,' she interposed. 'I was only going to ask you not to mention that you have seen this man.'

'I understand,' I said quietly.

'I cannot tell you now,' she continued, 'who the gentleman is, the sight of whom has naturally roused your curiosity. I may perhaps tell you soon—not that I am bound to do so, but you and Mrs Stonewell have been so very good and kind, that I should not like you to think unkindly of me.'

I went away with a lighter spirit. I felt happier. I had ascertained at least that she had not passed the gates of wedlock.

The next day I learned from her that the mysterious stranger was her father! Before telling me, she made me solemnly promise not to reveal the information to any one. This extreme caution surprised me very much. Why should she object to it being known that he was her father? I jumped to the conclusion that he had done something wrong, or why was this strict concealment necessary?

She perceived in my face the doubts in my

mind. I frankly avowed them. I asked her why he was hiding himself from the world.

She was so evidently distressed and troubled at my question, that it made me vexed that I had asked it.

'Do not inquire, Doctor. There is a sad reason for it. I will speak to him. He may like to see you, now you have found out his being in the house.'

'I should like to know him. Will you introduce me?'

She paused a moment, pondering. 'Well, I will tell him,' she said, 'so that you promise not to reveal to a single soul his presence in this place.'

'You have my word for it. It is a word that has never been broken.'

Next time I called, she told me that her father had consented to see me, then led the way to his room.

'Papa,' she said, as she opened the door, 'this is Dr Aylmer, who has been so kind to me and to poor Thompson. I have brought him to see you.'

He was sitting at a desk with his head bent over some writing. As soon as he saw me, he rose and bowed. He was a tall, well-formed man, and gentleman-like in appearance. He had strongly marked features, with eager eyes, capable, I thought, of flashing with fiery passion, when he was vexed. His manner with me, at first, was restless and suspicious. He watched me attentively, but after a few minutes he became more at ease. I soon saw he had something on his mind. He did not attend to my remarks, for he continually begged my pardon, and asked me to repeat what I had been saying. He looked unhappy and wretched, except when his daughter spoke to him, and then what a change came across his face! He smiled brightly, and seemed for a moment to forget his trouble.

'I see Ida very seldom now,' he said; 'her time is so fully taken up with Mrs Thompson. I feel very dull when she leaves me. It is a lonely life—shut up here. I don't like it, and yet—'

'But why stay up here, then?' I asked. 'There are many families in Spanners in whose society you would find pleasure.'

'It cannot be, Dr Aylmer. You do not know my unhappy circumstances.'

'That is true.'

'Well then, those circumstances compel me to keep myself away from my fellow-creatures.'

'I am sorry to hear you say so,' I remarked.

'Well, at anyrate I have reason enough in all conscience to be sorry for myself.' He spoke so strangely that I began to fear that his brain was affected. 'Do you know?' he continued, 'but for her!—pointing to his daughter—'I would wish I were dead—rather, that I had never been born.'

'Oh, dear papa,' remonstrated Ida gently.

'Unhappiness makes you despond,' I remarked.

'Yes, sir; and misery caused by—by—'

'I had rather not hear it,' I said, 'if it pains you to tell me.'

'It would shock you, Doctor. You and your Aunt have been very kind to my child, and I feel I can safely confide in you; but I will not burden you with a secret, that you might not

think right to conceal, and which would endanger me if it were published.'

His words made me wonder whether his brain was affected by some strange mania, or whether, as I had thought at first, he had committed a crime that was imperilling his liberty. Whatever the dread mystery was, I knew it was a frightful load on his conscience, and that the knowledge of it was saddening the life of his innocent young daughter. Even now as he spoke, the tears rose involuntarily to her eyes. He noticed this.

'Ida, dear child, come to me,' he said tenderly. 'Kiss me, my darling. You are unhappy. Oh, how cruel I am! If I were dead, you would get over my loss, after a time, and be cheerful again, and lead a brighter and a freer life. *Shall I die? Say the word.*'

'Papa, dear, what are you saying?' she cried in a distressed voice.

Poor man, I thought, he must surely be insane. I rose to take my leave.

'When shall I have the pleasure of seeing you again?' he asked, as he bowed, refusing for some reason to shake the hand I offered him. 'Tomorrow, will you again favour me? I am so dull, never seeing any one.'

I willingly promised, and left the room feeling wretched at the thought that Ida's father was the victim of some dread form of monomania.

CHAPTER III.—AN UNWELCOME VISITOR.

For several days after that, I, at his repeated wish, visited this strange man. I soon found him to be very intelligent, and capable of talking sensibly on most subjects. Sometimes I doubted that the opinion I had formed of him was correct; and yet every now and then some words of his would confirm it. That wild flash too in his eyes which I often observed when he was excited, gave colour to my suspicion.

Of Ida, the more I knew of her, the more she attracted me, and the more I suffered. If there was hereditary madness in the family, might not she also be afflicted some day? To think that such a misfortune could be reserved for that gentle girl, gave me much anxiety. To put an end to this painful suspense, I one day asked her if my conjecture was a right one.

'My father mad! Oh Doctor, what can make you think so?' she asked in astonishment.

I told her that his own occasional remarks had led me to form this belief.

'You are wrong, Dr Aylmer. His words have too true a meaning. It would be dreadful enough if he had been insane, but as it is'—She stopped, as if afraid she had said too much.

I would not pain her by asking her more; but when she gave me her hand and said good-bye, I could not resist pressing it warmly in my own.

At the gate, a man stopped me. 'That house is let, isn't it?'

'It is.'

'For how long, do you know?'

I said I was not certain, which was the fact.

'You know the people, don't you?'

'Yes; I do.'

'And their name?'

'Certainly, if I know them, I know their name.'

'What is their name?'

Not knowing who the person was, and disliking his manner, I waived answering his query. I did not think it right to answer inquiries about my acquaintances from strangers in the streets. I therefore passed on to pay some professional visits, without waiting for him to speak again. I saw that he looked angry, as he moved away in the opposite direction.

When I returned home I observed the man again. He was watching attentively the windows of the house in which my neighbour lived; his hat was very much drawn over his eyes, as if he did not wish to be recognised. The next morning when I was passing through our gate to go next door, I saw him entering their gate. He matched boldly up the steps before me and knocked. The servant answered the door.

'I have come to see your mistress on business.'

'My missus can't see no visitors, and there's illness in the house.'

'Indeed. But she will see me. Please to show me to the sitting-room?'

'I will ask her, sir. What name shall I say?'

'Oh, never mind my name.'

'I will tell her, sir, if you will wait here.'

'Show me to the parlour or drawing-room, then, while you go. You can say, if you like, that I am from the house-agent.' As he said this, I noticed a sinister smile on his face—which was an ill-looking one—that made me think he was uttering an untruth. I seemed instinctively to distrust him. I followed him into the house; but he looked displeased as I entered the room, into which he had been conducted.

'You're a friend, and a privileged one, I suppose,' he asked.

'Whose friend?'

'The young lady's.'

'You seem not to have yet ascertained her name,' I observed. 'If you *do* come from the house-agent, I should have thought you would have known it?'

'I do know their name, sir, and perhaps better than you do, though you had the incivility to refuse to answer my question when I politely asked you yesterday.'

'It is no business of mine,' I returned, 'to tell my friends' names to any stranger in the road who may choose to ask me.'

'You are, I suppose, the doctor who lives next door?'

I bowed coldly.

The door opened, and Ida came in.

'Oh, is it you, Doctor? I thought it was'—She stopped suddenly, as the young man standing behind me met her sight. She turned very pale, and looked on him with an expression of disgust, mingled with fear. I cannot call it any other name; it *was* fear. He was, I perceived, an unwelcome visitor. He held out his hand to her; but she refused to touch it. She simply bowed still more coldly than I had done.

'I was beginning to fear some of you were ill,' he said, with a hasty smile, 'seeing that Doctor here. I hope it is not your father?'

I never saw such a look of contempt as that with which she surveyed him.

He moved round and stared at me, which I took as a hint that he wished to be relieved of my presence. Thinking she might not like

speaking openly to him when I was in the room, I proceeded up-stairs to see my patient, who was now progressing favourably, and was on the fair road towards recovery. I did not see Ida again before I left, as she was still with her visitor. I observed the following day that she looked weary and harassed.

'You have been sitting up too late,' I said, taking her hand.

'No, indeed, Doctor. But it is true I have not slept at all since yesterday morning.'

'Mrs Thompson does not require such close watching now,' I continued. 'You should have gone to rest as usual.'

'So I did; but my thoughts kept me awake.'

'Then you must try and not think to-night; that's your Doctor's command, remember, and you must obey it.'

She tried to smile, but with very poor success, and the tears came to her eyes instead. How I longed to be able to comfort her.

'I am afraid,' I said, 'that your visitor yesterday caused you annoyance.'

'Don't speak of him; he is one of the chief causes of our unhappiness. If— But *ifs* are of no use.'

I told her that he had asked me the day before what their name was, and that I had refused to say. I inquired if her father knew he had called; she replied that he did. After a few minutes' conversation, I proceeded to the housekeeper's room. She was so very much better, that I told her she might get up—which she much wished to do—but that she was not to go farther than the next room, as she must avoid the slightest cold for some time to come. When I left Mrs Thompson, Ida asked me if I would go up to her father, as he had expressed a desire to see me. Before going to him, however, she made me promise not to say anything about the gentleman I had seen, as Mr Colebrooke did not like him.

I found him looking more thoughtful and melancholy than usual. I told him so.

'Yes,' he assented. 'Continual anxiety is no preserver of health or spirits.'

'But you should keep your mind calm, and not let your anxiety overcome you.'

'Ah, Doctor, what's done cannot be undone. Sin leads to sorrow, and it may now lead to a worse one than has yet been. The innocent may suffer for the guilty.'

I did not understand him; but I was sure his words had an ominous meaning.

Ida looked at him, and then gave a slight involuntary shiver. He noticed it.

'Ida, my child, you love me, don't you?'

'Dear papa, you know it.'

'You would do a great deal for me?'

'Try me,' she said, quietly and firmly.

'Even sacrifice yourself, my treasure?'

'Yes, I would even sacrifice myself.'

'Rather than see me die of my own choice?'

'Yes, yes; a thousand times.' She spoke emphatically, but with agitation.

'God grant,' I observed, 'that there will never be any need for such a sacrifice.'

'There may be, though,' said Colebrooke in a serious tone. 'Dr Aylmer, I repeat, strange though it may sound, there may be, and soon.'

I glanced at Ida, quite unable to comprehend

this singular speech ; but she looked away, apparently shunning my gaze.

'Ida,' continued her father, 'your assertion, then, is deliberate and unalterable!'

'Nothing can change it, papa.'

He smiled, and a gleam of hope, such as I had never seen on it before, lighted up his face. He kissed her tenderly. There was no doubt he was dotingly fond of his daughter, and at this no one could wonder. Who *could* help being fond of such a treasure?

'You hear her,' he said proudly; 'and it is true. I know she would do anything for me.'

'But I do not understand what you mean,' I said. 'In the, I hope, improbable event happening of your life depending on your daughter sacrificing hers, would you not willingly yield yours, rather than accept such an alternative?'

'Her life!' exclaimed he. 'No; you don't understand me. I mean her happiness, her free wishes—not her death. God forbid!'

'That is another matter, Mr Colebrooke. But you would not let her do even that, would you?'

He made no answer. But I observed that a struggle was going on in his mind, the contentions of self-interest and self-love on the one hand, and affection for his child on the other. Such a battle may soon have to be decided. Which force will be victorious?

THE HOMES OF THE INCAS.

PERHAPS some of the most remarkable of ancient dwelling-places are the ruined homes of the Incas, still scattered about on that great continent which, by a strange misuse of terms, we call the New World. In these vestiges of palaces and large cities, on the worn stones of grand and massive monuments, lies the undeciphered history of that motley empire, in which fragments of surrounding races conquered by the Incas were mixed up in a high degree; for before the waves of the Spanish invasion surged over Peru, there were no pages of history to turn back for a faithful picture of the national life; no possibility of tracing the successive steps which led the Incas from their early seat of civilisation to the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

Tradition says that the first homes of the Incas are to be found on the shores and islands of the sacred lake, Titicaca; and amongst the ruins there, many objects of interest in gold and silver and pottery have been discovered. Some of the few rare specimens of pottery present fair representations of the people of those far-off times, which show that they were identical in feature with their descendants of the present day. But at the period when this race of kings are first met with in history, their empire extended for two thousand five hundred miles, and included the present states of Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and part of Chili. It was traversed by the two great mountain-ranges of the Cordilleras. The eastern chain, which forms the true watershed of the South American continent, and which is unbroken even by the passage of rivers, runs parallel with the coast, sometimes a hundred

miles away, sometimes approaching so closely, that its rocky feet are washed by the long billows of the Pacific. At a varying distance rise the majestic snow-clad mountains of the Western Cordilleras, or the Andes proper, all rugged and intersected by deep valleys, through which the rivers, running sometimes a thousand miles due northward, find their way at last. From the vast bosom of the glaciers flow the Aperamac and the Vilcomaya, affluents of the Amazon—that mighty river, which discharges its wealth of waters into the Atlantic Ocean four thousand miles away.

But a great portion of this vast kingdom was practically uninhabitable. On the plateau of the Despoblado, which lies far above the limits of eternal snow, between the mountain-ranges, there is no trace of human habitation, excepting the small huts of refuge built by the Incas on the main road between the northern and southern parts of their dominions. And in the desolate region around the lake Umayo, the only distinguishing feature are the innumerable *chulpas* or burying towers, which stand singly or in groups upon the desert plain. Round or square, these tombs are solid structures, with one small cavity at the base, entered by a narrow hole in the side. Some are in ruins; a few as perfect as when first completed; many, doubtless, as completely vanished as the ashes they were meant to cover.

At the time of the Spanish conquest, the seat of the Inca power was at Cuzco, which is dominated by the stupendous fortress of Sacsalmachan; and at lovely Yucay amongst the woods that clothe the lower spurs of the Cordilleras. Here, in this lofty and semi-tropical valley, surrounded by a coronet of mountains that throw their glittering peaks against the pure blue sky to a height of eighteen thousand feet, the Incas built their palaces, and those far-famed gardens which sweep in curves around the hills, and descend into the narrow valleys. Washed by the rapid waters of a stream which flashes back a winding line of silver far away, each terraced garden was provided with an *azqueia* or canal, to receive the overflowing water of the mountain streams when the snow melted. Mr Squiers, late United States Commissioner to Peru, says: 'The system of irrigation of the ancient Peruvians is well worthy of attention. Even in those parts where rain falls during six months in the year, they constructed immense irrigating canals. They not only economised every rood of ground, by building their towns and habitations in places unfit for cultivation, and buried their dead where they would not encumber the arable land; but they terraced the hillsides and mountains to heights of hundreds and thousands of feet, and led the waters of mountain springs and torrents downward until they were lost in the valley below. These *azqueias*, as they are now called, were often of considerable size and great length, extending in some instances for hundreds of miles.'

Every pass to this secluded valley, hemmed in

by glaciers, ravines, and precipices, was guarded by an impregnable fortress: on one side rises Ollantaytambo; on the other, looming out grandly against the snowy mass of the Andes on a headland four thousand feet high, stands the irregular oval of Pisac. Each point of access to these strongholds was carefully walled up with stones, or crowned with towers. Not far from the modern city of Truxillo, the vast structure known as the Temple of the Sun covers an area of seven acres. It rises eight hundred feet, as a double rectangle, formed of huge adobes, and incases a central core of earth; beneath which is said to be hidden away an immense treasure called 'the great fish,' belonging to the ancient dynasty. A smaller treasure—the 'little fish'—was secured long ago by a Spaniard, to whom the secret of its hiding-place was revealed by an Indian cacique.

There are extensive ruins at Pachacamac, in the immediate neighbourhood of Peru; but perhaps the most interesting remains of an ancient city are those in the valley of the Rimac, where several miles of the heavy wall which surrounded the town still stand. Built not unlike the ancient Babylon, this curious city consisted of a labyrinthine maze of streets, passages, apartments, and pyramidal structures rising stage by stage, with terraces and broad flights of steps leading to their summits. The houses—generally formed in squares—were divided into an immense number of small apartments, none of which communicated; and only through the low doorways could the light and air gain admittance; these opened on to narrow alleys disposed in straight lines, and were so arranged that no door was opposite another.

Far anterior to the earliest legends of Peru, the shores of the Pacific Ocean were peopled by the Chinus, a race said to have been conquered by the war-like son of the ninth Inca, according to the Catalogue left by Garcelasso de la Vega, which commencing in the eleventh century, reaches to the Spanish invasion. They gave their name to the great city whose immense ruins now extend for many miles along the coast. Who can look without wonder and reverence on the vestiges of this ancient dwelling-place—on the mysterious tombs and temples which are the only record of millions of men who in unknown ages laboured and worshipped here? Of the temple built by the Incas in Chimu, only the walls remain; but the Sacred Virgins have left some curious relics amongst the ruins of their convent. Numerous dried-up human bodies, which have been preserved without embalming, were found sitting side by side, swathed up in winding sheets, and tightly corded.

On the same desolate sea-coast there is a vast and lonely space, which bears the name of El Castillo. In its sandy soil lie hundreds of buried skeletons; and the storms of Time in disinterring these remains, show that they are those of men who died a violent death. What battle-field is this overlooking the mighty sea? What manner of men were they who found a grave upon its surf-beaten shores? Within sound of the tides which for centuries have ebbed and flowed since these dry bones lived, they still remain to tell us that some great hosts did sweep across the plain; but their race, their feuds, their very names are now unknown.

So also of the Incas, that race which has left

such 'footprints on the sands of Time,' there is no record but in the blood-stained chronicles of the Spanish historians. And even in the dark history of the conquest of Peru, one of the saddest episodes in the annals of the world, where a monotony of bloodshed, of fire and sword and plunder, marked the progress of the Spanish arms, but little reliance can be placed on the exaggerated statements of Las Casas and other chroniclers of that period. They found no written language in the conquered land; and it was only dimly and vaguely, through the intermingled myths and legends of the people, that any record of the ancient Inca dynasty could be briefly traced.

OUR PETS.

IN THREE PARTS.—PART II.

I MUST now give some account of those pets which were our especial charge and delight, namely, the wild birds which we tamed, and of which we had always a considerable number. In what follows, I merely make a selection of the most interesting of our pets of this description.

The starling, which is one of the commonest of Shetland birds, makes a charming pet. He is easily domesticated, and becomes exceedingly familiar—a brisk, bustling, pert little fellow, with really a great amount of fun in his composition. One starling we had for many years. When not quite able to fly properly, he had been pounced upon by one of the cats; but was rescued, and, soon recovering from the fright, grew to be a beauty and a great favourite with us all. We never attempted to teach him to speak; but his natural powers of mimicry were extraordinary. He imitated the notes or cries of other birds to perfection. When the weather was fine, his cage was slung up out of doors, where he enjoyed immensely the sunshine and fresh air, and had ample opportunities for exercising his peculiar gift. The whistle of the curlew and ringed plover—the plaintive sound of the long-tailed duck—the croak of the raven—the caw of the hooded crow—the wild scream of the seamew—the sharp chatter of the tern, he perfectly reproduced. We had a mountain linnet at the same time, an exceedingly sweet songster. As soon as the latter commenced his morning song, Jack the starling began to fidget about and ruffle up his feathers, and work himself into a state of anger and indignation most amusing to witness. Presently he seemed to come to the conclusion that the linnet was either chaffing or challenging him; and as such a thing was not to be endured by such a very superior bird as himself, he resolved not to be outdone; so, settling himself on his perch, and drawing in his head between his shoulders till he appeared to have no neck at all, he poured forth a song so exactly after the linnet fashion and on the linnet key, that the imitation was pronounced as good as the original. But the exertion seemed to be great and fatiguing, and was seldom sustained for any length of time, and always concluded with a few harsh, loud, and utterly unmusical bars of his own proper pipe, shrieked out in an angry and impatient manner intensely ludicrous, and just as if he meant to say: 'There! Whatever you may think, that's as good as yours any day.' After a few minutes'

rest and a little refreshment of water, he would begin again, and repeat the same performance.

Several times we had amongst our pets a snowy owl. This magnificent and rare bird does not seem now to breed in Shetland, though there is reason to believe it did at one time. Our pets of this species were, therefore, adults which had been slightly wounded, or caught when asleep at the side of a stone on the hill-top. They are certainly the most beautiful and handsome of their kind; but they do not make good pets. They are too powerful and naturally fierce to make it safe to allow them much liberty; and possibly owing to their not having been tamed from the nest, they never got reconciled to confinement and restraint. They always recognised the person who usually fed them, and showed, in a certain uncouth way, that they were not ungrateful for the rabbits, mice, starlings, buntings, and the like fare with which they were liberally supplied; but on the whole, we found them sulky, fierce, and untractable; and they showed very little intelligence, justifying the phrase which describes a man who is dull of apprehension to be as 'stupid as an owl.'

We had a splendid peregrine falcon once, and he had no lack of the brightest intelligence. He was my especial property, and although always gentle and fond of being noticed and caressed by any one, towards me he showed the most devoted attachment and affection. He flew after me whenever I allowed him, and was never so happy as when perched upon my arm or shoulder. I was wont to take him to a fine warren, and he soon got quite adroit at catching rabbits.

Often we had merlins, kestrels, and sparrow-hawks brought us from their nests in some wild and lofty cliff by a noted and obliging cragsman, who was always able and willing to supply us with almost any kind of young birds we might wish for pets. All the hawks we found easy to tame, docile and intelligent; and they were consequently great favourites. But of all our pets amongst the land birds, I select for special notice the hooded crow. He is not a beautiful bird certainly; but he makes up for his not handsome appearance, by his exceeding cleverness. Birds as a general rule do not seem to be endowed with a great sense of humour; but the hooded crow is an exception. He is brimful of fun of a certain description, delighting in nothing so much as practical jokes; and withal he is good-tempered, merry, and cheerful. The sly cock of his head, and twinkle of his keen little eye, it is impossible to misinterpret; he is continually meditating a trick or mischief of some sort. No bird is easier to tame; and he speedily becomes not only confident, but pertly familiar and impudent. We had one in particular for many years. We called him Crabbie because of his sidelong mode of progression when not on wing. His liberty was seldom restricted, unless he had been guilty of some prank more than usually audacious, and then his punishment would be a day or two's confinement, which he greatly hated; but he soon managed to coax us into giving him his freedom, and manifested the utmost gratitude to his liberator. His moral sense was at least as obtuse as a cat's. He delighted in stealing, simply as it seemed for its own sake, not because he could make any use of his plunder. Spoons, needles, wires, pins of thread, balls of worsted, little one's

shoes and socks, anything and everything that was portable to which he could get access, he would carry off, and carefully hide, covering them over with bits of turf; and then wiping his bill, in the most self-satisfied manner hop away as though he had performed a highly meritorious action. Alas for the half-knitted stocking which might be left on a chair or table, if Crabbie was about! The wires would quickly be pulled out and removed, and the stocking torn to tatters. I caught him one day—and an intensely droll figure he cut—hopping out of doors with a pipe in his bill. On another occasion he made off with a piece of tobacco. We never could make out whether he had any intention of himself trying the soothing effects of the weed. He had, or affected to have, a great dislike to bare feet, as the little boys who often came to the house with baskets of sillocks or with messages, had but too good reason to know. On the whole, he was on terms of very good friendship with the dogs and cats; but it always afforded him exquisite delight to tease them, particularly to pinch the point of an outstretched tail, if the owner thereof happened to be asleep; and a pinch of his sharp and powerful bill, whatever pleasure it might afford him to inflict, was no joke to his victim.

Once an old woman was bringing a message to the house. Just as she was crossing a stile, Crabbie's quick eye fell on the spotless cap which adorned the old body's head. It was an opportunity too tempting to be resisted. Down he swooped, neatly plucked off her head-dress, and with a triumphant 'Cra, Cra,' flew away with it. Not being aware there was any such 'uncanny brute' about the house, her consternation may be imagined; and when she appeared at the back door bereft of her white muslin mutch, and told, in tones of horrified agitation, how she had been despoiled of it by a 'craw,' she met with much sympathy from the domestics, who hated Crabbie with a most perfect hatred. And little wonder they hated him, for he teased and tormented them unmercifully, and by his never-ending tricks often imposed upon them a great amount of additional work. For instance, clothes on the bleaching green he seemed to regard as spread out for the special purpose of affording him an opportunity of showing how completely he could soil them. At anyrate, what he did, whenever he got the chance, was to march and hop all over them in the most systematic manner, with the dirtiest effect.

What I am about to relate will appear to many incredible; but having frequently witnessed it, I can vouch for its accuracy in every particular. Our old cook was a most expert dresser of the fine Shetland shawls so well known and so much prized. It is quite an accomplishment to be able to dress these delicate fabrics, and none but a Shetlander can do it properly. The shawl having been washed and slightly starched, is stretched over the bleaching-green, a few inches from the ground, with a multitude of wooden pegs like pencils, and allowed to dry in the sun. Crabbie would sit on some wall at a little distance, intently watching the proceedings of the old cook, who particularly detested him, and with whom he had a standing feud. Then he would fly off, and presently return with the very filthiest and wettest clod he could find, and of set purpose drop it

upon the outstretched shawl, thereby rousing the righteous indignation of poor Meggy, who gave expression to her wrathful and outraged feelings in language much more forcible than choice; all which did not in the least affect Crabbie or disturb his equanimity. In these ways, however, he got to be such a nuisance, that it became necessary on bleaching days, or when a shawl was being dressed, to make sure he was not at large, else the bleaching or dressing was certain to prove labour lost. But then he soon got so exceedingly cunning and adroit in avoiding capture, that it was often impossible to secure and confine him. At last, as we could fall upon no plan of curing him of his thievish and mischievous propensities, we were obliged, most reluctantly, to part with our poor Crabbie, who was sent to a friend in the south.

Sometimes we had ravens amongst our feathered pets, once a piebald of this species from the Farøe Islands, where that variety is not uncommon. The raven, like his congener the hooded crow, is by nature a thief. Indeed, thievish proclivities may be said to be a conspicuous characteristic of the whole genus, as the magpie, jay, rook, jackdaw. No other class of birds, or beasts either, with which I am acquainted shows the same complete obliquity of moral sense. They steal not merely to satisfy the cravings of hunger—that one can understand and even condone—but apparently for the pleasure of the thing. It is clear they can make no use of needles and pins, knives and forks, brushes and combs, rings and other trinkets; but just you let them have the chance, and everything of this sort they will carry off and hide carefully, as a dog hides a bone. It is not with them a case of stealing in order to live, but living in order to steal; and I have no doubt their community always holds in highest esteem, and raises to the highest rank in their republic, the raven that is the most adroit and successful thief.

The raven is as easily tamed as the hooded crow; but he does not make so interesting and amusing a pet, being rather of a sulky and solitary disposition. In his wild state, he is excessively suspicious and wary, and he needs to be, for no mercy is ever shown him. He is a terrible robber of the poultry-yard, destroys great numbers of young lambs, and will never hesitate, if he gets the chance, to attack a weak or sickly pony. The poor ponies, even in the most inclement weather, never know the luxury of a sheltering roof, and during the long winter seldom get any food but the scanty pickings of a barren common, varied with an occasional breakfast of seaweed. Consequently, they become very lean and weak in spring; and after lying down on the cold, damp ground, which they never do in winter, they often get so stiff as to be unable to rise without assistance. They are then said to be 'in lifting.' This is the cruel raven's opportunity. In the cold gray dawn of the morning, he spies his victim making unavailing efforts to rise, swoops down upon him, and with a fierce dab of his powerful bill destroys one eye; a second thrust, and the pony is blinded; and in a few hours his carcass affords a rich repast to his murderer and a score of his kind. No wonder, then, that this 'bird of ill omen' is persecuted and slaughtered without mercy, and that sometimes a price is set upon his head. But in

spite of gun and poison, the wary and sagacious ravens are still all too numerous. They build their nests in the loftiest and most inaccessible precipices, which generally defy the most expert and daring cragsmen to scale, and it is therefore not always easy to get a young raven for a pet; and the universal detestation in which they are held perhaps helps to make them regarded as not particularly desirable ones.

A CUBAN BALL, AND HOW IT ENDED.

I was dreamily reclining in the balcony of my house in Cuba one evening, the half-burnt cigar almost dropping from my fingers, when I became aware, by the barking of Jack, that some one was making his way up-stairs. Turning rather lazily towards the *sala*, and shading my eyes from the strong light within, I waited with true West Indian patience for a glimpse of my visitor. Jack's welcoming bark proclaimed the arrival to be a well-known individual; and I felt relieved; for the mail had been distributed that day, and I was too tired with work to feel in a humour for entertaining any but an intimate friend.

'Hollo! Fred,' I exclaimed, as I caught sight of the figure of a tall, stalwart, young Englishman. 'Is that you?'

Without replying to my unnecessary query, Fred advanced, and throwing himself into a comfortable bamboo chair opposite, said that I was the very man he wanted to see.

'I know why,' I remarked. 'You want to know if I am going to Montero's? What sort of an affair it is going to be? Who are going? And last of all, is *she* going?'

'Of course, that's why I came round here; for I knew that Inez would send you word as soon as it was arranged. Are you going?'

'Well, perhaps I am. But you know that you don't care a rush whether I am going or not, and that your chief, I may say only anxiety is as to whether *she* is going. Let me relieve your anxious mind at once. *She* is. But it was hard work to persuade her. You know that she was going into retirement to the convent for six weeks: she had forsworn dancing and all the other little social allurements; but Inez managed it all splendidly.'

'Do you know that from Inez herself?'

'Yes; I was there last night.'

'But I thought she was going to no more dances.'

'So I have just told you; and you knew it already, or at least that she *said* she had done with them; but then she had heard that you were not going; and it was not until Inez had vowed that you would be there, that she changed her mind, and agreed to go.—But I say, old fellow, you must look out for yourself; and now I am speaking seriously. You know as well as I do that Juan Morillo is pretty far gone in that quarter. He is a man I don't like; and the fact that Conchita cordially detests him, makes me all the more anxious to put you on your guard. He

is to be there ; so be careful, and keep clear of a row.'

For some weeks past we had known that Don Carlos Montero was going to celebrate the anniversary of his wedding by giving a grand fête at his country estate. Some seven or eight of those interesting seasons had already passed, and there seemed to be no particular reason why this one should be specially honoured ; but the truth was, that his young wife wanted to have a ball ; and he was too fond of company and amusement himself, not to accept the plea of the wedding anniversary as a sufficient excuse for giving his consent.

Don Carlos did nothing by halves. A splendid estate and ample fortune enabled him to gratify desires which in any other country than Cuba would have seemed extravagant whims ; and whether it was a picnic or a ball, those who were fortunate enough to be invited were sure of a hearty welcome and a glorious time. It was not to be the first of the fêtes for which the Quinta Montero was so justly celebrated ; but it was to surpass them all. His relations and most intimate friends from the city and country were to arrive early on the day of the fête, in good time for breakfast ; the guests who were invited for the ball were expected at eight o'clock in the evening.

The momentous day arrived at last ; and never had the Cuban sun shone on a merrier party than that assembled at the station at six in the morning. About a dozen dark-eyed señoritas, chaperoned by three or four mammas—quite enough too, the girls thought—and seven or eight gentlemen, married and single, nearly filled the long railway carriage, open from end to end, which was specially engaged to take us to our destination. How pleasant the ride was in the early morning air, as we rushed through cane-fields, cocoa-nut groves, and plantain-walks ! Station after station was passed, and field after field, where the cane was being cut down and gathered by the scantily attired slaves ; and at last, about eight o'clock, we arrived at the little station of Colmillos. This was our stopping-place ; and here we found *quitrines*—the Cuban country carriages—and horses for the gentlemen, waiting to carry us to the *quinta* (country-house).

A smart ride of half an hour brought us to the long avenue of Indian laurel trees which led up to the house ; and in a few moments more we had dismounted, and were assisting the ladies to alight.

I need say nothing about our welcome ; it was a truly Cuban one ; and only those who know the Cubans, can understand how sincerely demonstrative it was. But I must say something about the place where we expected to pass two nights at least. It was a square two-storied house, built of the coral stone of which the island is composed, a broad veranda running round the two sides and front. A flight of wide steps led from the veranda to the broad carriage-sweep, the centre of which

was tastefully laid out into plots luxuriant with shrubs and flowers. Opening on to the veranda in front was the *sala* or hall, the principal room in a Cuban house. This was a large and lofty apartment, about sixty by thirty-five feet, having at one extremity a cabinet, where the elders could play chess or cards while watching the dancers, and at the other the principal bedroom. Immediately at the rear of the *sala* was the dining-room, a long wide corridor, opening on to a veranda or gallery at the back, where the two side-wings of the house and the outhouses at the far end formed the *patio* or court-yard. At one end of the dining-room, a winding staircase led to the upper bedrooms, the balconies of which commanded a view of almost the entire estate.

As we drew up in front of the house, we scarcely recognised the old acquaintance whose hospitable roof had so often sheltered us before. The veranda pillars were already clothed by nature with heavy wreaths of honeysuckle ; but all the rest of the front of the house was decorated by a mass of rich green dotted with flowers. From the roof hung festoons of laurel leaves and choice flowers ; while hundreds of Chinese lanterns in verandas and gardens were to illuminate the whole at night. On the open space in front of the garden, and outside the gate, curious-looking objects mounted on posts told us that a grand display of fireworks was to form part of the evening's programme.

About a dozen young negroes were busily engaged opening cocoa-nuts, whose cool delicious water was to refresh us after our long and dusty ride. Presently the ladies came down, looking fresher and brighter than in the early morning ; and soon the welcome sound of a gong told us that breakfast was on the table. And what a breakfast ! This over, we lit our cigars, and followed the ladies to the veranda, where we found rocking-chairs and hammocks in plenty. But Cuban ladies are passionately fond of dancing at all times and seasons, and we had not been long enjoying our *dolce far niente* ease, before some of them had persuaded the band, which had come with us by rail in the morning, to take up their instruments in exchange for the knife and fork. So there was no help for it ; and in spite of the warnings of our host against tiring ourselves out before evening, we were soon slowly moving over the marble floor of the *sala* in the Cuban dance.

The *danza* is peculiar to all Spanish-American countries, and is admirably adapted for hot climates. It is a simple slow three-step movement, the feet scarcely rising from the floor ; and it is one of the best dances in the world for carrying on either a conversation or a flirtation with your partner. At regular intervals, the music dashes off into quick time, the dancing stops, and the ladies of each four couples which happen to be nearest to each other form a chain and back to their partners. By the time this has been done, the music strikes off into the original measure, and the dance is resumed. The music is so peculiar, that a foreigner must become accustomed to it before he learns to understand and appreciate its strange weird symphony.

After this, a lady and gentleman danced the

zapateo, a favourite dance of the country-people. The two performers stand opposite to each other, the gentleman with his hands clasped behind his back, and the lady holding up her dress in front just high enough to display the feet and ankles, of whose symmetrical smallness Cuban ladies are pardonably vain; then, to the accompaniment of an air that is too musical to be called jerky, they begin with a slow side-to-side movement, the feet stamping the floor, as, advancing and retiring, they move round each other, the lady coquettishly inviting her companion to approach her; and then, as he obeys, suddenly turning from him with a wicked gleam of mischief in her sparkling black eyes, which seem to say: 'Follow me if you dare!' Quicker and quicker speed the dancers, constantly varying the figures; until at last, after a quarter of an hour's dancing—no slight exertion in a tropical climate—they give place to another couple. Tired at last, we went for our well-earned sangaree, cigars, and siesta, and so put off the day.

As evening drew on we were obliged to exchange our cool white drill suits for something staidier and heavier; for alas, even in a country ball, unless it happens to be a *guajiro* or peasant-ball, where the concourse is a mixture of country-folk and town swells in peasant dress, black coats at least are *de rigueur*. They would not have been allowed in Don Carlos' house, however, where every one did and dressed as he pleased, had it not been that the Governor of the district had accepted an invitation; so, while wishing the Governor at Jericho, we were obliged to submit.

When, after dressing, we descended to the *sala*, we found that the guests were already arriving in numbers. The presence of the ladies was marked by quite a cloud of muslins and tarlatans and other light stuffs, of a bewildering variety of colour, surmounted by the black lace mantillas, that fell in graceful folds from the head far down the back. The civilians among the gentlemen were in black broadcloth coats, white vests and trousers, and patent leather boots; and this uniformity was pleasantly broken by the presence of a goodly number of officers in full dress, many of them covered with decorations.

Fred and I were standing together near one end of the *sala*, and Conchita, who had come out from town with our party in the morning, was standing with Inez not very far from us, when I saw a gentleman, on whose arm a rather elderly lady was leaning, dart a swift glance, and give a distant bow as he recognised us. It was Juan Morillo. I looked mechanically towards Conchita, and saw that she was visibly agitated, for the same eyes had met hers. I repeated in English my previous caution to Fred; and then recognising some old friends, who entered at that moment, left him.

Precisely at eight o'clock, the hour at which dancing was to commence, the orchestra, which was placed out on the piazza, began the Imperial Quadrilles, always the first dance at a Cuban ball. By some fatality, I saw that Morillo and Fred were *vis-à-vis* in the set next to ours; and I knew that Conchita had promised to dance that quadrille with her Englishman. I was so absorbed in looking at them, that I was only recalled to myself by my partner tapping me with her fan as she asked me if I were asleep. I saw no more of them for

some time. Indeed I was so thoroughly enjoying myself, that the excitement and my reliance on Fred's prudence made me forget him and Conchita entirely. There were strolls on the piazza and through the less crowded garden-paths, sparkling with Chinese lanterns, and through shrubberies enlivened by myriads of fire-flies; ices and lemonades were in request, and had to be brought; and scarcely had the duties and pleasures of one dance been concluded, when another began.

At eleven o'clock we were to have supper; but it was nearly half-past that hour before two hundred, or about one half of the guests, sat down in the immense dining corridor. The other half, of which we, Don Carlos' most intimate friends, formed part, were to wait until the first had finished; and long enough it seemed, for we were both tired and hungry. We danced, flirted, and strolled; but at length our turn came; and great was our surprise when the gong again sounded, to find the same table as though it had not been used at all. How Don Carlos managed it, I know not; but a fresh relay of viands had been placed on the table, as it were in the twinkling of an eye. Not one of the numerous dishes broken into, not a spot on the table-cloth, not a particle of cork on the table or floor. It was as though he had had an army of genii in his service. Small wonder that the first two hundred took so long when we saw what was set before us. It was pleasant to be in that second table, and to know that no hungry crowd was waiting impatiently to succeed us; so we took our time. When at last we rose, the signal was given for the display of fireworks to commence. At any time, they would have been beautiful; but on this night they were more than beautiful, and could I have stationed myself in the crown of one of the tall palm-trees and looked down on the spectacle, I might have imagined that I was gazing on a scene out of the *Arabian Nights*. The brilliant dresses of the ladies, strangely lit up by the many-coloured blaze of light from the house in the background, the black and white costumes of the gentlemen, the gay uniforms of the military, and the lights from the cigars, made a fairy scene under that starlit Cuban sky which I shall never forget.

'Bravo! Bravissimo, how magnificent!' was the cry when the finest work of the artist was at length displayed. The applause had scarcely died away, when suddenly, far above the hissing and explosions of the fireworks, were heard two reports of a pistol and the loud shriek of a woman. The shots came from a shrubbery on the right of the house; and in an instant a score of the party were on the spot.

Bending over poor Fred, who was to all appearance dead, we found Conchita. 'He has gone, there! there!' she cried, pointing in the direction of the nearest cane-field; and at once a number of the gentlemen started off in pursuit. We carried my poor friend into the house, where after some time the doctors, of whom several were at the ball, gave us the gratifying intelligence that he was still alive. Later on, he was able to tell us how it had occurred. High words had passed between him and Morillo, who wanted him to fight without delay. Fred refused to have anything to say to him that night at least, and they parted. When the fireworks began, Fred

and Conchita, no doubt taking more interest in each other than in pyrotechnics, wandered off when they knew that they would not be missed. It was then that Morillo confronted them, and again challenged Fred to fight there and then. He again refused; and the refusal had no sooner passed his lips, than Morillo raised his pistol, and firing first at Fred, and then at Conchita, fled through the shrubbery. At the moment, Fred felt nothing, but almost immediately became unconscious. Conchita had escaped unhurt. Fred's wound, though dangerous, might not prove fatal. He had a strong constitution, and on that the doctors pinned their faith in his recovery.

Of course the ball was brought to a sudden termination; and there were now none in the house but the guests from town. Three hours after the event, the pursuers returned, no trace of the fugitive having been found. Fred recovered in time; and six months afterwards, I saw him and Conchita on board the steamer leaving for Europe, where they were going to spend their honeymoon.

Two years passed away, and during that time nothing was heard of Juan Morillo, although no doubt ever existed in our minds that he had joined the insurrection. Time showed the correctness of our suspicions. I was in Santiago de Cuba, when one day the Spanish cruiser *Tornado* came into the magnificent bay towing the steamer *Virginus*, which had been captured after a long exciting chase. The news soon spread through the town that a large number of insurgents, arms and ammunition, were on board; and sincerely we pitied the poor unfortunates whose fate was only too certain. In the evening, we knew that a number of them had been condemned and, in accordance with Spanish custom, had been placed in the 'chapel' (*capilla*) where, strongly guarded, and attended by priests, they were to pass their last night on earth engaged in devotions. At eight o'clock next morning, they were to be shot; and from my balcony I saw the sad procession pass on its way to the place of execution. The foremost of the prisoners was the captain of the captured steamer. Above six feet in height, of a noble, commanding presence, which was strengthened by his long flowing gray beard, he walked to his death with an air of quiet dignity, which was strangely in contrast with the demeanour of many of his companions. I do not mean that there was any flinching in them. Brave and defiant to the last, the condemned Cubans seemed to glory in the prospect of their approaching fate. It could be nothing worse than death, that they were sure of; and again and again their cries of '*Viva Cuba libre!*' rose on the still morning air. Several of them belonged to some of the best Cuban families; one of them I knew, who, as he passed a house near mine, threw his hat up to some ladies who were weeping on the balcony.

With a start, my eyes fell on a prisoner in one of the last files. It was Juan Morillo! I pitied him then, and wished I could make him understand it; but he passed without looking towards me. A quarter of an hour afterwards, the hush of silence which everywhere prevailed was broken by the first sharp volley which sent six souls into eternity. The firing went on until all had paid the penalty.

We have often spoken of our ball and its tragic ending; and when Morillo's name is mentioned, none speak more feelingly of his sad end than Fred and Conchita.

THE RAIN-TREE.

Some travellers in South America, in traversing an arid and desolate tract of country, were struck (says *Land and Water*) with a strange contrast. On one side there was a barren desert, on the other a rich and luxuriant vegetation. The French consul at Loreto, Mexico, says that this remarkable contrast is due to the presence of the *Tamai caspi*, or the rain-tree. This tree grows to the height of sixty feet, with a diameter of three feet at its base, and possesses the power of strongly attracting, absorbing, and condensing the humidity of the atmosphere. Water is always to be seen dripping from its trunk in such quantity as to convert the surrounding soil into a veritable marsh. It is in summer especially, when the rivers are nearly dried up, that the tree is most active. If this admirable quality of the rain-tree were utilised in the arid regions near the equator, the people there, living in misery on account of the unproductive soil, would derive great advantages from its introduction, as well as the people of more favoured countries where the climate is dry and droughts frequent.

NIGHTFALL.

LIE still, O heart!

Crush out thy vainness and unreach'd desires.

Mark how the sunset-fires,
Which kindled all the west with red and gold,
Are slumbering 'neath the amethystine glow
Of the receding day, whose tale is told.
Stay, stay thy questionings; what would'st thou know,
O anxious heart?

Soft is the air;

And not a leaflet rustles to the ground

To break the calm around.
Creep, little wakeful heart, into thy nest;
The world is full of flowers even yet.
Close fast thy dewy eyes, and be at rest.
Pour out thy plaints at day, if thou must fret;
Day is for care.

Now, turn to God.

Night is too beautiful for us to cling

To selfish sorrowing.
O memory! the grass is ever green
Above thy grave; but we have brighter things
Than thou hast ever claimed or known, I ween.
Day is for tears. At night, the soul hath wings
To leave the sod.

The thought of night,

That comes to us like breath of primrose-time,
That comes like the sweet rhyme
Of a pure thought expressed, lulls all our fears,
And stirs the angel that is in us—night,
Which is a sermon to the soul that hears.
Hush! for the heavens with starlets are alight.
Thank God for night!

HARRIET KENDALL.

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